

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION ARA-10

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P 182120Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9204

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date: SITREP Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 1385

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB PINS SHUM AR
SUBJECT: DISAPPEARANCE OF LOCAL POWER UNION LEADER
MID-DAY FEB 18

DEPT FOR ARA LABOR ADVISOR JOHN O'GRADY

REF: BUENOS AIRES 1287

1. WHILE LIGHT AND POWER WORKERS IN THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES CONTINUE TO WORK NORMALLY, THE UNION'S LEADERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY HAVE DECLARED A "STATE OF ALERT" IN PROTEST AGAINST THE DISAPPEARANCE OF OSCAR SMITH. THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY TEMPORARY WORK STOPPAGES IN SOME OF THE OTHER CITIES OF BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE.

2. THERE ARE STILL NO CONCRETE LEADS AS TO SMITH'S WHEREABOUTS OR AS TO WHO HAS HIM. THE CONSENSUS AMONG TRADE UNIONISTS CONTINUES TO BE THAT SMITH HAS BEEN SEIZED BY AN OPERATIONS GROUP OF ONE OF THE SECRET SERVICES OR PERHAPS A JOINT GROUP FROM VARIOUS OF THE ARMED FORCES ACTING AUTONOMOUSLY. OFFICIALS OF THE LABOR MINISTRY, WITH WHOM UNION REPRESENTATIVES HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT, ARE SAID TO BE SPECULATING ALONG SIMILAR LINES. BASED ON THESE CONVERSATIONS, TACONE AND OTHERS APPEAR RELATIVELY CONFIDENT-- AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT-- THAT SMITH WILL EVENTUALLY TURN UP ALIVE-- THAT IS, THAT THE PERPETRATORS DO NOT NOW INTEND TO ASSASSI-

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NATE SMITH AND MAKE IT APPEAR TO BE THE DIRTY WORK OF THE GUERRILLAS. HOWEVER, THEY DON'T EXPECT SMITH TO RESURFACE FOR SOMETIME.

3. A NOTION CURRENTLY BEING PROPAGATED AMONG THE LIGHT AND POWER RANK-AND FILE IS THAT ADMIRAL IMPOSTI, THE PRESIDENT OF SEGA, AND CARLOS MACCHIIS, ONE OF THE BOARD MEMBERS OF THE ENTERPRISE, ARE SOMEHOW IMPLICATED IN SMITH'S DISAPPEARANCE. IMPOSTI IS ALLEGED TO HAVE TOLD SMITH "TO WATCH HIS STEP" DURING THE RECENT STRIKE. MOREOVER, THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE FORWARD MOVEMENT IN TERMS OF GETTING A DIALOGUE STARTED BETWEEN UNION REPRESENTATIVES AND THE ENTERPRISE ON THE HOST OF OUTSTANDING ISSUES, AS AGREED UPON BY SMITH AS THE CONDITION FOR SUSPENDING THE RECENT STRIKE. THE "GUARDIAS" ARE CURRENTLY WORKING A SIX-HOUR SHIFT AT THEIR NORMAL POSTS AND THE TWO ADDITIONAL HOURS RECENTLY IMPOSED AT OTHER LESS UNHEALTHY TASKS. ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL UNDERSTANDING, A MIXED LABOR-AMANAGEMENT COMMISSSION WOULD DISCUSS THE ELIMINATION OF THE TWO EXTRA HOURS FOR THE "GUARDIAS" AND THE OTHER WORK RULES AND SOCIAL BENEFITS AT ISSUE, BUT THE MANAGEMENT HAS NOT YET BEGUN SUCH DISCUSSIONS IN EARNEST. THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT THE LIGHT AND POWER WORKERS WILL REINITIATE THE STRIKE EARLY NEXT WEEK.

4. DISMISSALS CONTINUE IN OTHER STATE ENTERPRISES DIESPITE A SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN UNION LEADERS AND GOVERNMENT REPESENTATIVES. THERE HAVE BEEN ACTS OF SABOTAGE AND SHODOWNS IN THE RAILWAYS AND THE BUENOS AIRES SUBWAY SYSTEM AS WELL AS IN THE STATE TELEPHONE ENTERPRISE. THERE IS A GROWING PROSPECT THAT THERE WILL BE WALKOUTS IN THESE INDUSTRIES WITHIN A WEEK OR TWO.

5. THE AFL-CIO TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT VIDELA WAS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS AND TRADE UNIONISTS HAVE WARMLY WELCOMED THIS RESURGENT SIGN OF AFL-CIO INTEREST AND FRATERNAL SUPPORT. CLAT HAS ALSO BEEN ACTIVE IN GETTING LOCAL CHURCHMEN TO EMIT STATEMENTS OF CONCERN OVER SMITH'S DISAPPEARANCE.

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